648, 665, 642, 433

Hungary EC1

[For the economic and political position of Hungary under Soviet control, see 85: Zinner, R1 Soviet Union, Category 116, Pp. 157B-163B.]

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Hungary EC1

[For a discussion of the new statute of the Hungarian Workers' Party of Hungary modeled on the statute of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of October 1952 and compared with the party statutes in the other states of the eastern bloc, see E1 Europe, 10: Mehnert, category 116, pp. 1-10]

[For a reprint of the preamble to the statute, see 19-22]

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793 distributed. The State, in return, pays a small amount (kongrua) toward the support of the clergy, the payment of which is conditioned by the individual priest's signing the oath of loyalty to the regime. The bulk of the income of the parish priest (plébános) must therefore come from the parish, who willingly support their priest in spite of their own financial problems. This economic dependency of the plébános upon the members of his church has not caused the loss of his disputed but so far unshaken prestige among his flock or even among the entire population of the village.

[795] As for the organization of the churches, the Catholic hierarchy is headed by the Primat of Esztergom who presides over the Bench of Bishops comprising three archbishops and fourteen bishops. The highest authorities of the Protestant churches are the synods held periodically; their highest administrative body is the konvent. There are four general districts, subdivided into counties which conform to the territorial units of the state administration.

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665 The still powerful impact of the Church upon public life was demonstrated in recent years by the returns of the 1947 elections in Hungary. The completely inexperienced and unorganized Demokrata Néppárt, which had

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been founded a few weeks before election but which enjoyed Church backing, emerged the strongest party among the peasants and the second strongest party in the nation as a whole--all this against heavy odds of Communist violence and fraud at the polls.

208 then either published or thrown out. Public information and propaganda are inseparable in Hungary.

The basic twofold aim of Communist propaganda in Hungary is (a) the reeducation of the masses on a Leninist basis and (b) the gradual Russification of the country. Perhaps the word Russification is too strong, but it certainly represents a distant undeniable goal. Today the Magyars have so far assimilated very little from Russian culture. The Party's (or government's) information activity toward the citizens is based on Lenin's own assumption that propaganda tries to drive home a set of ideas for individuals or a group while agitation has more limited content, carries only a few ideas, but carries them to all the people.

208 645 On June 8, 1949, the Propaganda Ministry was revived under the name of the Ministry of People's Culture. Its importance is clearly indicated by the fact that its first head was József Révai himself, one of the most influential Moscovites and the chief theoretician of the Hungarian Communist Party.

208 645 Within the Party organization, the Propaganda Division of the Central Directorate is in charge of all information activities and is directly responsible to the Secretary G...l.

Annex "A," Subparagraph 2h, Political Background

BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY PERSONALITIES

127 The author of this report has had very little basic information on the career of Hungarian key personalities. The contents of this subparagraph are largely based on the mimeographed pamphlet compiled by Imre Kovács entitled Short Biographical Studies ... (New York: National Committee for a Free Europe, 1951. Pp. 14). The cabinet changes, so frequent in Communist countries, which have occurred in the period between the publication of Mr. Kovács's pamphlet and April, 1955, are noted here but, for the rest of the data, Kovács's information is extensively quoted.

665 As in any Communist country, the central power in the State is in the hands of the Communist Party which, in Hungary, bears the name of Magyar Dolgozók Pártja 'Hungarian Workers' Party.' The leadership of the Party is, for all intents and purposes, the depositor of political power. The latest elections to the highest posts in the party took place on May 30, 1954, with the following results:

First Secretary of the Central Committee: Mátyás Rákosi.

Members of the Political Committee: Mátyás Rákosi, Imre Nagy (ousted in 1955), Ernő Gerő, Mihály Farkas (ousted in 1955) Lajos Ács, István Hidas, Antal Apró, András Hegedüs, Béla Szalai. (Added in 1955: István Kovács, József Mekis.)

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Members of the Secretariate: Mátyas Rákosi, Mihály Farkas (ousted in 1955), Lajos Ács, Béla Vég, János Matolcsi.

Chairman of the Central Committee of Control: Károly Kiss.

Below follows a short biography of each of the more important office-holders in June, 1955, in Hungary in alphabetical order, along with the biographies of persons recently eliminated from the political hierarchy but who are deemed to be important for their previous activities and, perhaps, for their future potentialities.

ÁCS, LAJOS. Member of the Central Committee, member of the Political Committee since 1953, member of the Secretariate of the Communist Party since 1955. In charge of organization, especially among the peasants. A party bureaucrat.

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ALTOMARE, IVAN. Minister of the Food Industry. Information lacking.

ÁPRÓ, ANTAL. Minister of Building Materials, Deputy Prime-Minister. Former Chairman of the Hungarian Trade Union Association. Young and promising Communist.

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BATA, ISTVÁN. Minister of Defence. Lieutenant General, and former Chief of Staff of the Hungarian Army; as such he actually ruled the Army in the name of Farkas Mihály, his predecessor. Bata was

645 [701] before the war a career officer in the Russian Red Army of the USSR and a Russian citizen. Succeeded Farkas in 1953.

BEBRITS, LAJOS. Minister of Post and Transportation. "1. Was taken to Russia as prisoner in the first war and was trained there. He went over to the United States in the twenties, where he became chief editor of the "Hungarian Future", participated in the underground movements and organized the Hungarian Communist movement. When Sándor Magyar and György Endresz, pilots of the aircraft "Justice for Hungary", arrived to New York after their ocean flight - Lajos Bebrits lead a group of Hungarian Communists to the port to demonstrate against the pilots of "Justice for Hungary", so that he was arrested by the police and sentenced in Newark under the charge of rioting. He was actively engaged in pioneer activities among the Hungarians of Miami and founded a Hungarian club. After the termination of World War II Bebrics returned to Hungary. 2. Neither Moscow-trained Communist, nor Nazi. 3. Not a Soviet citizen. 4. Has a political black-book. 5. Educated journalist, speaks English, Russian and Hungarian."

665 647 BENKE, VALÉRIA. Chairman of the Hungarian Office for Radio Broadcasts. One of the leaders of the post-war Communist womens' front organization, the MNDSZ, later General Secretary of the Peace Council.

In 1953 she was elected MP and elected also to the Central Committee of the Party. 665 647

BERES, ANDOR. Chairman of the National Office of Planning. Born in 1900. Economist. Formerly General Secretary of the same agency.

BOGNAR, JOZSEF. Minister of Interior Trade. Born in 1917. 645 "1. Of middle-class origin, Roman-Catholic, professor with university degree. Member of the Smallholders' Party but in the services of the Communists. 2. Had Communist leanings. 3. Not a Soviet citizen. 4. Has no black-book. 5. Became Minister of Propaganda in 1946 and was involved in the so-called conspiracy. He was not arrested and taken to Stalin Street 60 only under the condition that he must work for the Communists as under-cover agent in the Smallholders' Party. Minister of Interior Trade since 1948." He was Mayor of Budapest in 1947.

BOLDOCZKY, JANOS. Minister of Foreign Affairs. Peasant background, formerly in the diplomatic service.

CSERGO, JANOS. Minister of Smelting and Machine Industry. Information lacking.

CSOTTNER, SANDOR. Minister of Mining. "1. Participated in

642 661 Hungarian industry and commerce provided they did not attempt to meddle in politics. In order to keep their financial power they were forced to give political backing to Count Bethlen's "Unity Party".

There was parliamentarianism. This meant that 90% of the deputies were created by the government.

665 642 Even a Social Democratic Party existed, but it was forced *to sell us out first.* This was perhaps the cleverest trick of the "black Count".

The Social Democratic leader was a former locksmith, Charles Peyer. Before the war he became secretary of the Trade Union Council. In 1919 he became Minister of Interior in a very short-lived government formed after the Communist collapse. Then he became Minister of Public Welfare in the reactionary government created with the help of the Allied representative, Sir George Clerk. In 1920 he was in Geneva at an international congress when he heard that Horthy and Bethlen had murdered the two other labour leaders, Somogyi and Bacsó. He did not dare to return, but a year later Bethlen invited him to come home. *He had an offer to make.*

665 642 423 Bethlen detested the idea of a land reform which would mean the abolition of the feudal system. But at the same time he had to prove to the outside world that his Hungary was "nice" and democratic. So he made his famous offer. The result *was an agreement by which the Social Democratic Party was allowed to exist, provided it undertook no activities among the four million landless agricultural labourers.*

This agreement was one of the chief tricks by which our lords, almost alone in Europe, have so long been able to postpone all questions of land reform. And it has very effectively removed any danger that we—the land-workers and industrial workers—might get some say in the affairs of the country and realise our aspirations for civilised existence.

And of course by permitting the Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party *to exist but not to act,* Bethlen could say to the Western world that Hungary was a democracy.

The Trade Union officials and Social Democratic leaders were forbidden to give the lie to Bethlen's propaganda about his wonderful democratic consolidation. These leaders were happy to be alive and happy to keep "the progressive flame" flickering in the country of our lords.

This agreement was concluded in December 1921. Peyer and his friends of the labour leadership became somewhat unpopular with their own people.

They defended themselves by saying:

1. They concluded this agreement with Bethlen's Government. That government might go, and then labour would be free to act.

2. This was a tactical step to save the existence of the Party and the Trade Unions.

3. Even during the period of voluntary passivity, industrial labour could go on organising and educating its own masses.

4. The land-workers were a backward, uneducated mass.

We do not want to pass judgment. We know that the peasants are a conservative lot. We know that the landless land-workers are often called peasants, thereby confusing the industrial workers, who dislike peasants. But the fact remains that the Bethlen–Peyer agreement was one of the most important pillars supporting the camouflaged dictatorship of Hungarian feudalism.

Our lords had other tricks up their sleeve. They even pretended to carry out some land reform. This trick also worked. Horthy created a new Hungarian knighthood, the so-called "Order of Heroes". Officially all those Hungarians who had fought exceedingly well in the war of 1914–18 could become "heroes". In fact, all the White Terrorist boys were knighted, all the members of Horthy's White Army, all the friends and servants of our lords. About fifty thousand other ranks received some land which had been taken away from "traitors" like Count Károlyi and his friends. In this way Bethlen could say to the Allies that he was carrying out land reform, and he also had a trustworthy defence guard for his régime.

The gentry were an important pillar of the Horthy–Bethlen rule. *The gentry are usually landowners in theory but not in practice.* They wear a signet ring with the family emblem on it, and have the manners and customs of a country squire, a lot of dissatisfaction, an empty pocket and a great craving for a rich, elegant life. They are—or pretend to be—members of a noble landowning family which lost its estates because of "them". "They" vary quite a lot. "They" are the Jews, "they" are the progressives, "they" are those red skunks who brought in a law forcing the nobility to pay taxes.

We have already mentioned that Hungary had a decentralised administration and that the counties—"the noble counties"—had a lot of power. The gentry—the gentlemen—were the Civil Servants of the State or county. Trade or industry or any profession was naturally considered below the dignity of the gentry.

7: Jaszi S-4, 5 (no date) 1946 EC1 Hungary EC1

Landholders Party received 2,688,101, the Social Democratic Party 821,566, the Communist Party 800,257, the National Peasant Party 322,988, the Citizens Democratic Party 78,522 and the Radical Party 5,762. The National Assembly comprises 409 members: the Small Landholders have 245, the Communists 70, the Social Democrats 69, the National Peasants 23, the Democrats 2. These returns reflect the present political forces in the country surprisingly accurately.

Of course, one often hears the assertion that the overwhelming victory of the Small Landholders Party was a result of the vote of feudal and capitalist reactionaries who had been dispossessed by the revolution and prohibited from building up a new party. Another explanation given is that the great strength of the Small Landholders Party was that it offered a chance to register a protest vote against the Russian occupation, which is, indeed, an enormous burden, especially for the rural population. However, both explanations are oversimplified. There surely was a considerable counter-revolutionary vote in the "conservative victory," and it cannot be denied that the long Russian occupation is both economically and morally unwelcome. The ghastly situation inside the country could hardly fail to make the latter so in any case. A plea for UNRRA help for Hungary states, for example, that there are 200,000 orphans to be cared for; that 400,000 children are suffering from rickets; that 17,000 of the children suffering from tuberculosis are without hospitalization or convalescent care, without medical supplies, proper nourishment, clothes or bedding; that there is not adequate food for nursing mothers, and no food or clothing for newborn babies; that surgeons are operating without anesthetics; that thousands of persons are dying as a result of the lack of insulin, penicillin, digitalis, sulfa drugs and other medicines; that there are no surgical dressings, iodine, X-ray films, or plaster of Paris; and that there were no warm clothes for the winter, not enough fuel and no supplies to repair the damaged homes. These terrible conditions are reflected in a continuous rise in crime.

Terrible as is this economic and hygienic situation, however, it is only a contributory influence in the political situation. The real cause of the success of the Small Landholders Party is that none of the Marxist parties could offer a real program to the peasants, the small bourgeoisie or considerable numbers of the intelligentsia — in short, to a majority of the country. The rigid

7: Jaszi S-4,5 (no date) 1946 EC1 Hungary EC1

669 class doctrine of the Marxist parties is alien to the traditional
665 mentality and widespread religious feeling of the masses. In the election campaign, the Communists said not a word about the issue of private property versus Communism, and made no mention of the collectivization of land. Yet the issue was the village and small-town way of life versus vast bureaucratic organizations. Marxist Socialism's total disregard and misunderstanding of the values of rural life made it, in all its forms, inacceptable to the greater half of the population.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the Small Landholders Party is not reactionary, nor even conservative; it is a progressive party in favor of social and cultural reforms. It was the strongest in the country after the advent of Horthy, and though it was demoralized during the Bethlen period, and later became infected with adventurers, it has always remained healthy at the core. In coöperation with the "village researchers," it may perform great deeds in the future.

669 The elections in Hungary carry a great lesson for the progressives of all parties in all countries. It is often said that people who have once lived under an oligarchic rule or later under a Fascist dictatorship are not ripe for democracy — that after centuries of servitude they are unable to make proper use of the vote. This statement too is a half-truth, and such truth as is in it does not point primarily against the masses but against the corrupted middle and upper classes. The Hungarian people at their first fully free elections proved that their natural intelligence and sense of decency shows them the right political path. If they are not terrorized or cowed — in short, if political freedom lasts — and if they are granted the elementary material conditions of civilized life, which for them implies the growth of new forms of economic and cultural coöperation, I see no reason why they should not march resolutely toward the higher forms of western and Nordic peasant culture.

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000 Can the equilibrium created by the recent elections be maintained? Hungary is in the Russian orbit. The military and economic ties binding her to Russia are tight (for example, the issue of banknotes recently became a privilege of the army of occupation). Will it be possible for her to establish a degree of independence — that is to say, freedom of political life, cultural

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

665 The great bulk of the Deputies, ever since 1920, have belonged to a great central party, most recently known as the *Party of Hungarian Life*. There have been a certain number of Deputies representing the extreme Right—the *Arrow Cross*, the *National Socialists*, and a party known as the *Party of Hungarian Regeneration*. On the other side, there have been the small *Catholic Party* and a handful of *Social Democrats*, *Smallholders* and *Liberals*. The Szálasi Government installed by the Nazis in October, represented the domination of the quite discredited Arrow Cross; it repressed all members of the Centre as well as of the Left.

631 LOCAL GOVERNMENT. For purposes of local government, Hungary is divided into Counties. Each of these has at its head an official nominated by the Government and called the *Föispán*—a title usually translated as Lord Lieutenant. Under him is the *Alispán*, or Deputy Lieutenant, a permanent official elected by the County. Each County has its own Council.

The 'County' is a characteristic Hungarian institution, with a long tradition of which it is very proud, and in the old days the Counties were very independent and often very powerful. To-day their influence is much smaller, since under modern conditions much of the administration is conducted centrally from Budapest, through the various Ministries; and many officials in various parts of the country are directly subordinated to their Ministry, not working through the County. The

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

They occupied Budapest with German and pro-German Hungarian troops, seized the Regent and, after issuing in his name a recantation of his proclamation and a deed of abdication, carried him off to Germany in 'protective custody'. Under their armed patronage the 'Arrow Cross', a band of fanatical extremists, seized power. They were headed by an ex-officer of Armenian descent named Szálasi, who proclaimed himself 'Leader of the Nation' and issued the order to fight to the last. Although the Arrow Cross comprised only a small minority of the people, it was able, with German help, to suppress resistance in the capital and in West Hungary; the fight went on, while behind the line, the Germans hurriedly stripped the country bare. Corn, cattle, the contents of stores, warehouses and shops, machinery, even workers, where they could be induced to move, were hurriedly transported to Germany.

Meanwhile, the Russians advanced swiftly. Soon they were at the gates of Budapest and by Christmas had encircled it. A frightful battle now took place. The Germans, whose only care was to gain time for the construction of new defences in the Reich itself, defended Budapest street by street, house by house. They were helped by raw, fanatical levies of the Arrow Cross, some of the men desperate refugees, and a few factory workers, affected by the very Radical character of the Government's propaganda, and a few units of the Hungarian Army. Meanwhile, the wretched population, swollen by refugees to nearly 2,000,000, starving and deprived of light, heat and even water, lurked in cellars waiting for the end. When at last

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[434] only 186 were working at over 70 percent of prewar capacity, while 1,109, or over 25 percent, were completely out of operation. It is estimated that even in 1946/47 the national income was only 65 percent that of 1938 and less than 50 percent that of 1943, the peak war year. The Hungarian economy as a whole, and especially the industrial sector, heavily concentrated in Budapest, was among those most seriously damaged in Europe.

[458] The Soviet occupation, heavy reparations payments, general political uncertainty, and a runaway inflation in 1946 made the task of reconstruction even more difficult.

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648 According to the Potsdam agreement all Axis property, even that which had been forcibly taken over by the Germans during the war was handed over to the Soviet Union. Subsequently, new Soviet-Hungarian companies began to mushroom in manufacturing as well as in transportation, and it was at this time that the Hungarian-Soviet Oil Company, Maszovol, was organized.

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[471] While the Zala fields had escaped major war damage they suffered by the wasteful practices engaged in under pressure from German and later Soviet military authorities (see Table VII).[1] After prolonged negotiations the MAORT properties (all areas west of the Danube) were returned to the American owners in 1946.

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471 A land reform and the nationalization of industries "with monopolistic character" such as steel and coal were swiftly carried out after the war.

[565] Land reform, nationalization without compensation, and the inflation of 1946 largely destroyed the propertied classes, and in the chaotic conditions a downward leveling also affected the skilled workers.

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[665] By mid-1947 the communists within the coalition government had virtually eliminated any possibility for non-communist government plans, and for all practical economic purposes the communists were in control. Dictated by the realities of the prevailing postwar conditions, certain

1 [Cf. page 88, category 116 -- Analyst]

12: Free Europe Committee U-4 (no date) 1954 EC1 Hungary EC1

THE OIL INDUSTRY IN THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

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basic factors would have made some postwar government planning imperative under any government. There was the urgency for the reconstruction of the badly damaged and dislocated economy; the required prompt delivery of large quantities of reparations goods to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia under the terms of the peace treaty; radical economic changes due to the elimination of Germany as a trade partner and the emergence of the Soviet-Hungarian mixed companies; and the industrialization of the country as already envisaged by the prewar governments.

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The communists, of course, desired and proposed state planning along their own lines, to fulfill the above conditions, their ultimate political and economic objectives being the transformation of Hungary into a "socialist state on its way to communism" and the integration of the Hungarian economy into that of Soviet Russia. Having nationalized the basic industries, having eliminated the domestic "capitalist" class, having destroyed all Western confidence in Hungary's credit, and having rejected participation in the Marshall Plan, the Hungarian government had to embark on large-scale planning of its own.

The Three-Year Plan of 1947

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The relative position of the Hungarian oil industry can only be evaluated in context with the over-all economic picture, which was drastically affected by postwar state plans. Accordingly, while the oil industry was not of paramount importance, and while much pertinent and accurate data relating to the oil segment of the economy is not available, the main features, objectives and achievements of the Three-Year Plan must still be outlined.

The Three-Year Plan of 1947 was the result of plans submitted to Parliament in the fall of 1946 and in early 1947. Formally accepted in July and launched in August of 1947, it aimed at raising the national income 14 percent above prewar but still below that of 1943. It

20: Gyorgy S-4 (no date)1947 ECl Hungary ECl

With the liberation of Hungary came the task of restoring the equilibrium of constitutional life and of basic political institutions. Budapest was still under siege when a new provisional government in Debrecen set about reconstructing the country's political life. In December, 1944, elections for a Provisional National Assembly were held in the liberated territories with decidedly favorable results for the Smallholders and Social Democrats. The new National Assembly swiftly confirmed a Provisional Government which succeeded in keeping itself in political power for about a year, thus bridging the constitutional gap created by the utter political confusion of the first few "post-liberation" months.[4]

In 1945 a new electoral law prepared the way for a decisive national election. The new law assured the right of vote to every Hungarian citizen over the age of twenty, regardless of education, religion, sex or social standing. The first election after the liberation of the country was held under the new electoral law and generally conformed with the recent democratic orientation in offering not only a wide franchise but also a choice among six political parties ranging from Conservative to the ubiquitous Communists. The most significant constitutional step in the establishment of a democracy was undoubtedly the inauguration of a Hungarian Republic.[5] The new Law, No. I-1946, on "Hungary's Form of Government" gives an interesting and forceful background-picture of the new Republic. According to the preamble the power of the State rests with the Hungarian people who exercise their legislative authority through the democratically elected National Assembly. The basic document also states that "the republic guarantees to its citizens the natural and inalienable rights of men." On paper this law unde-

4 This provisional government represented all the parties which had taken part in the national resistance movement up to the time of the collapse of the country after a period of German occupation. A detailed party-breakdown of this provisional government headed by General Béla Miklós of the Hungarian Army, shows the following picture among the members of the Cabinet: 3 Social Democrats, 3 Communists, 2 Smallholders, 2 Conservatives, 2 Army Generals who were members of the first Armistice Commission to Moscow when the Horthy Government, in its last desperation, was negotiating for peace with the Red Army. It is interesting to note that of the two portfolios given the Smallholders Party, one was the all-important Ministry of Foreign Affairs while the portfolios of the Communists included the bases of economic reconstruction, trade, agriculture and communications.

5 A series of conferences and meetings held in January, 1946 among members of Hungary's leading political parties decided on the abolition of the Monarchy and on the establishment of a Hungarian Republic. These decisions were later endorsed by the new Hungarian National Assembly in its first parliamentary sessions. Cf. issues of the Hungarian daily, *Magyar Nemzet*, for January and February, 1946. Also John Haire, "Hungary Today," *New Statesman and Nation*, Nov. 10, 1945, pp. 314-315.

20: Gyorgy S-4 (no date)1947 ECl Hungary ECl

687 fresh victims seems inexhaustible. The purge of the public services was
727 scarcely completed when the demand was raised for new large-scale dis-
661 missals."[10] Recent guilt-trials have increasingly reflected the eminently vindictive, purely partisan motivation of Hungary's new ruler, the Communist Party, whose leaders have never hesitated to bare their extreme ideological bias, turning it offensively and indiscriminately against the champions of alleged political or economic reaction.

Political Parties and Domestic Politics

645 The composition of the first post-war coalition government corre-
666 sponded roughly to the results of the country's post-liberation election.
665 The number of votes cast reached almost five million; of these the Smallholders Party polled well over two and a half million while the combined votes cast for the Communist and Social Democratic Parties barely exceeded one and a half million. Obviously, the elections of November 1945 inflicted an undisguised and significant defeat upon the two extreme leftist parties, particularly on the Communists, while temporarily assuring the middle-of-the-road Smallholders Party of a decisive governmental majority. The Smallholders' victory was most overwhelming in Budapest where the ratio of Communist votes was even lower than in the rest of the country. The new coalition government was built around nine members of the Smallholders Party and four members each of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties.

Several unexpected political developments were in startling contrast with this first chapter of democratic renaissance. The constitutional significance of national elections was considerably deflated by the pre-election agreement of the three major political parties to continue their coalition *regardless of the results of these popular elections.* This partisan maneuver gave the Communists an opportunity to exercise undue power, also displayed a strange "ballot-proof" version, a disappointingly autocratic appraisal of the role of national elections in parliamentary forms of government. According to its official interpretation, the agreement "was absolutely necessary to maintain national unity. There were such serious problems to be solved that none of the parties could attempt to undertake the task alone. For this reason . . . the major parties of the Hungarian Independence Front have agreed to maintain the

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10 Cf. J. O., "Hungary Between East and West," *The World Today*, May, 1946, p. 214.

20: Gyorgy S-4 (no date)1947 EC1 Hungary EC1

coalition government after the elections. Their unity was also characterized by the fact that discussions about the formation of the coalition Government began on the day of the elections."[11] This somewhat prematurely formed government was under the titular leadership of Zoltàn Tildy of the majority Smallholders Party, but in reality the reins of power were tightly controlled by two new political leaders. Through a flexible "general staff" arrangement which permitted them to become Deputy Prime Ministers without portfolio, Arpàd Szakasits of the Social Democratic and Màtyás Rákosi of the Communist Party have wielded the decisive balance of power in the cabinet ever since the formally correct but politically meaningless national elections of November, 1945. The power relationships did not alter noticeably when Zoltán Tildy was elected president of the new Republic and his post was taken by Ferenc Nagy, former President of the National Assembly and a colorless and conservative member of the same Smallholders Party.[12]

The weakness of native liberal peasant movements is another disturbing element in the post-war situation. Obviously, neither in Hungary nor in the surrounding Danubian countries is the majority of the peasantry adequately represented by the parties of either Left or Right; in fact, it has no more political representation today than it had under various pre-war regimes. Between the two World Wars only one liberal Hungarian peasant group, the Independent Small Farmers Party, had moments of political influence under the effective leadership of Gaszton Gál. Even this movement was doomed by the semi-feudal and aggressive rule of successive governments and the small land-holders who should have actually formed the political backbone of the country

11 Cf. Istcan Szàva, *New Hungarian Domestic Policy* (Budapest, 1946), pp. 34-35. (Published in English). The author of this official account also gives a complete and significant summary of the principal objectives of Hungary's first "popularly elected" post-war government. These involved the following problems: to guarantee the food supplies, to break down the prices and inflation, to nationalize the mines and key-industries, to guarantee order and public security, and *to overcome the reaction*. In the light of the recent conspiracy and the seemingly wholesale liquidation of all "reaction," this early war-objective of the Government is certainly noteworthy.

12 According to official Hungarian interpretation, "The change in the person of the Premier did not affect the composition of the government; there were also minor changes in the cabinet without affecting the principles upon which the coalition was based." I. Szàvà, *New Hungarian Domestic Policy*, p. 35. Despite several sharp political reversals, Ferenc Nagy is still Prime Minister in the present coalition government.

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665 were gradually reduced to the role of an impoverished and underemployed proletariat.[13]

Most of the left-wing peasant leaders who survived the years of Nazi terror have now joined forces with the Social Democrats and the Communists. When the first post-liberation government was formed in Debrecen in 1944 the young and intellectually alert group of "village explorers" combined in a promising new National Peasant Party. Although the Communists encouraged this group, the results of the national elections in 1945 did not justify early hopes. Revolutionary minded peasants voted for the Communists while the vast majority of village and farm voters chose the more conservative Smallholders. Thus the Peasant Party has been given mere ceremonial recognition in the coalition government; it has only one member in the Cabinet, a small and subdued group of twenty-three representatives in the National Assembly.

What is the nature and political program of the Smallholders Party? Founded in 1930 as an opposition group to Horthy's "semi-parliamentarian" regime, this party has always relied on the support of certain broad segments of the population, such as a conservative agrarian class and the more liberal urban intellectuals. In its present composition the group is primarily a bourgeois and middle-class bloc cemented together by the obvious reluctance of its members to accept the ideas, men or slogans of either the extreme Left or the extreme Right. Hungary's Smallholders Party represents, on the whole, the conservative-democratic interests of the country. It has achieved temporary success because of its decidedly mixed membership which ranges in its elements from "progressivism" to "reaction." To retain an internal political balance it firmly believes in tolerance and consistently preaches moderation. Aptly stated in the words of its present leader, Premier Ferenc Nagy: "The Smallholders are not interested in attacking anybody but if com-

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13 The present Smallholders Party has never represented the economically submerged or depressed elements of the peasantry. If it did speak for the agricultural classes at all (a doubtful premise in itself), it upheld primarily the interests of the "kulak" group. Not unlike other Danubian peasant groups it was run by typical townsmen, such as Tibor Eckhardt or Ferenc Nagy. Cf. "Danubian Peasant Parties," *The Economist*, Jan. 11, 1947, pp. 54-55.

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pelled to fight, they will defend themselves fully and will participate in the struggle, hoping to promote the cause of peace."[14]

The Social Democratic Party originally assumed the role of bridging the gap between Left and Right, thus helping to stabilize and unify the divergent elements of political leadership. Nothing could be more vital for the future of Hungary, particularly in domestic politics, than the maintenance of a strong center, progressive but not violent, popular without being extremist. The Socialist members of the coalition cabinet have in the beginning ably performed the role of economic and political mediation. They held the portfolios of Justice, Industry and Commerce, in an attempt to balance well-entrenched Communist power, manifested in the key-posts of the Ministries of the Interior, Popular Welfare and Communications.[15]

Recently, however, a significant shift of political positions occurred upsetting the precarious equilibrium of domestic politics. The Thirty-Fifth Official Congress of the Social Democratic Party, meeting in Budapest in February 1947, ended with a widely publicized and spectacular victory of its extreme left-wing leaders over the more conservative right-wing members who seemed to have been completely discredited. This bitter discord within the party was the climax of a long process of disagreement with an ever widening area of political misunderstanding and intolerance. The final outcome of the Social Democratic Congress was the dramatic decision of the present Party leadership to liquidate its moderate members and to integrate its activities with those of the Communist Party. For all practical purposes the Social Democratic Party thus ceased to exist independently and has entered the uncertain path of cooperation with the Communists.[16]

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14 Cf. *Hungarian Information Service*, published by the Hungarian Legation, Washington, D. C., issue of Mar. 4, 1947, pp. 3-4. These desperate and embittered words were uttered in the course of the liquidation of the recent "reactionary" conspiracy. The conspiracy-scare finally led to a purge of the Smallholders Party and to a full-fledged domestic political crises.

15 The Smallholders have managed to retain several important portfolios, such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, War and Propaganda.

16 Cf. *Népszava*, official daily paper of the Social Democratic Party, especially in issues of Feb. 1-8, 1947, front-page accounts of the exact progress of the Party Congress. Cf. *The Manchester Guardian*, (Feb. 7, 1947, p. 4.) in a cautious but informative editorial which clearly raises the fundamental issue, "The question that remains is how far the Social Democratic Party, as at present led and constituted, can continue to exist independently . . . and yet in cooperation with the Communists." The more recent behavior of certain Social Democratic leaders has dispelled all doubt concerning the outcome of this political dilemma.

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665 The new coalition of the Left has several aggressive champions. Vice Prime Minister Arpád Szakasits, a fairly experienced and flexible politician who seems to dominate his less astute colleagues in the Social Democratic Party, forcefully outlined the changed objectives and attitudes of the extreme Left. "As a Party we have clearly decided to participate in reconstruction, break up feudalism, pave the way for nationalization, rebuild the civil administration of the state and wage merciless war against reaction—in any form . . . The trend of our foreign policy is deeply influenced not only by our geographical proximity but by the obvious recognition that the Soviet Union is the defender of world peace and the friend of all free peoples. In domestic politics we shall follow a similar course; if there is a change, it will be in a positive direction. Our alliance and cooperation with the Communist Party will be drawn even tighter than it has been in the past."[17]

665 648 Even Mátyas Rákosi, official leader of the Communist Party, could not have expressed the objectives and aspirations of his group any better than Szakasits. Rákosi's own political arguments would be far less convincing without the continued occupation of Soviet troops and military officials. The hard core of the Hungarian Communist Party is a group of about eighty trained leaders who wield almost all actual political power and direct the daily conduct of the nation's affairs. Most of them have managed to retain their original Soviet citizenship; all of the influential members of the Party have spent several years in Moscow, partly because the Horthy government never tolerated their presence in Hungary, partly to complete the process of political indoctrination and education for eventual leadership.

665 Rákosi spent most of the inter-war period either in the Soviet Union or in Hungary's jails which were unusually receptive to Communist leaders on almost any echelon of authority. His first major political role was participation in Béla Kun's ill-fated revolution of 1918-1919. In 1920 he quietly emigrated to Russia, returning to Hungary in 1925 as leader of the illegal Communist Party. He was arrested soon after his return and condemned to eight years in prison. Having completed his first prison term, another suit was filed against him on charges of "uninterrupted revolutionary activities"; this time (January 1937) he was condemned to life imprisonment. Under increasing Soviet pressure the

17 This significant address was given at a plenary session of the Social Democrats' National Party Congress in Budapest, and reported in detail in *Népszava*; Feb. 12, 1947, pp. 2-3.

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Hungarian government finally released him, and in 1940 exchanged him for several Hungarian agents held in the prisons of Soviet Russia.[18] Rákosi again returned to Hungary in January 1945, as official leader and Secretary General of the Hungarian Communist Party. Since November 1945 he has been a member of the Government as one of the three Vice Prime Ministers.

For the past two years Rákosi has been the guiding power and top policy maker of the Communist Party. Until the recent conspiracy and crisis in domestic politics, his attitude appeared to be one of conciliation and of professed belief in the coalition government. If statements of Communist leaders can be taken at their face value, Rákosi's group was apparently not intent on establishing a sweeping or exclusive political control of the country's domestic life—at least not during an initial period of post-war reconstruction fraught with its own particular brand of difficulties. Even as late as June 1946, Rákosi emphatically declared that his Party did not aim at dictatorship but at "effective collaboration in a concentration of national forces."[19] This statement implied the tactical decision of a continuing participation in a three-party coalition. The Communists thus refrained for a while from an open split of political life into a crippling tug-of-war between government and opposition; the primary objectives of Hungary's reconstruction (land reform, currency stabilization, gradual nationalization) were for the greater part achieved in this period of inter-party truce conceived in an atmosphere of ideological moderation.

By the winter of 1946 the blueprint of Communist party tactics revealed a drastic change in political attitudes. A second phase of *Gleichschaltung* activities was launched coincident with the slow withdrawal of the Red Army occupational troops, the signing of satellite peace treaties and with a slight increase in political interest and economic pressure from the West. The ultimate purpose of this phase was clear to all

18 This item of political information is not generally known, for Rákosi's exchange was the result of secret negotiations between the two governments. Official biographies touch rather lightly on this transitional period in Rákosi's life. Cf. a recent press-release of the Hungarian Information Service, published by the Hungarian Legation in Washington, D. C., which simply states that "In 1940, due to the Soviet Union's intervention, Rákosi was freed. Then he emigrated to the Soviet Union." *Hungarian Press Release*, No. 7, June 10, 1946.

19 Cf. *Magyar Nemzet*, issues of June, 1946. These comments were widely quoted and discussed in the Hungarian press, which faithfully records every Communist utterance, regardless of its political significance.

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665 interested observers, particularly as the shaky foundations of the coalition government, built on a tenuous layer of last minute political compromises, collapsed almost immediately under their own weight.

In January and February 1947 several hundred persons were suddenly arrested by the police. The Communist Ministry of the Interior claimed that a large-scale and secret conspiracy was under way with the object of restoring the rule of Nicholas Horthy who fled the country in October 1944. The conspirators were accused of wanting to establish their own government, drawing largely on personnel associated with Horthy's regime. To achieve this it was stated, they organized the secret *Magyar Közösség* (Hungarian Unity Society) which was controlled by two small groups of the counterrevolutionary elite, a political Committee of Seven and a military Commission of Six. The discovery of this conspiracy and the ensuing purge were carefully timed so as to remove certain potentially dangerous anti-Communist elements before the Soviet Army would have to leave the country.[20]

665 701 The purge of "reactionary plotters" was directed against two definite groups in Hungary's public life, the Army and the Smallholders Party. It first intended to remove a few high-ranking Army leaders in order to streamline the remaining meager armed forces of the country. The Army would thus be re-screened into a highly reliable political force under the leadership of such extreme Communists as General Pálffy who has been the real power in the Ministry of War ever since the first reorganization by the coalition government. It is interesting to note that among the first few persons arrested in this "rightist-reactionary conspiracy against the state"[21] were many of the chief protagonists of the Hungarian-Soviet armistice negotiations of 1944-1945, men who spent several months in Moscow preparatory to the final surrender. General Vörös, Faraghó and Almássy were leaders of this group, and their arrests were carried out by the Communist controlled Political Department of the War Ministry, an organization which played a notorious

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[928] 20 According to the terms of the peace treaty, ninety days after ratification all Soviet troops except for a few units guarding the lines of communication between Russia and Austria must be withdrawn from Hungary.

21 Cf. *Szabad Szó*, organ of the National Peasant Party, Jan. 16, 1947, and *Világ*, Jan. 18, 1947. News of a "fascist" conspiracy quickly spread abroad where it caused immediate speculations concerning the future destinies of Hungary, involving the inevitability of a Communist dictatorship. Cf. "Die Verhaftungen in Budapest," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Jan. 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1947; "Hungarian Arrests, Alleged Foreign Aid to Conspirators," *The Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 18, 1947; "Hungarian General Flees, and Hungarian Communist Demands," *The Times*, London, Jan. 14, 1947; C. M. Rodney, "The Hungarian Conspiracy," *The Central European Observer*, Jan. 24, 1947.

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role throughout the liquidation of the conspiracy. The Army leader most seriously implicated was Major General Lajos Dálnoki-Veress, who apparently served as head of *Magyar Közösség*, central organ of the reactionary plot. When the conspiracy was unmasked, the Ministry of the Interior used General Veress' "full confession" to complete the list of suspects; within a few days it arrested well over one hundred "fascist criminals," including six deputies of the Smallholders Party.[22]

As the Communists and Socialists continued to tighten control over the government, the weeding out of anti-democratic factions involved primarily three important Cabinet Ministries; Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Reconstruction. Again the most prominent victims proved to be members of the Smallholders Party. The Ministry of Interior suddenly insisted that one of the anti-Communist members of Parliament, Béla Kovács, secretary of the Smallholders Party, be arrested. In Kovács' case all previous formalities were neglected; he was summarily jailed by Soviet occupational authorities on a set of charges including espionage against the Soviet Army, terrorism against the Russian occupation forces and participation in the formation of armed anti-Soviet groups.

Shortly after these arrests, Vice-Premier Rákosi demanded a national election, a new popular mandate to the two workers' parties by which Hungary's achievements could effectively be insured and decisive steps be taken in the fight of progressivism against feudalism. The Social Democratic Party fully supported Communist demands throughout these revolutionary developments. Giving a new and more flexible definition of democracy in Hungary, Arpád Szakasits explained at a Communist-Socialist rally that the Government could no longer be based on "mere arithmetical illusions." He argued that the "unnatural" electoral victory of the Smallholders could not form the basis of political rights. "We have always demanded a thorough purge of the Smallholders Party, and told its leaders *to abandon arithmetical illusions. We urged them to allow only peasants and other honest people to speak in their councils.*"[23]

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22 Cf. "Die Verhaftungen in Budapest, Ein Communique des Innenministeriums," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Jan. 6, 1947, front page; Albion Ross, "Hungary Reports Plot to Restore Horthy to Power," *The New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1947, pp. 1 and 35. László Rajk, Communist Minister of the Interior, controls the entire police system; he is not a Moscow emigré, but an extremist fanatic for whom even the Moscow-trained group of Communists is too slow. His brother was a Nazi stormtrooper, he himself is a fairly young ex-schoolteacher. Rajk was instrumental in carrying out the full-fledged purge of the Hungarian Army.

23 Cf. *Magyar Nemzet*, Jan. 19, 1947, p. 1. (Italics mine.)

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665 At this stage of developments Western public opinion began to
648 show interest in Hungary's first major post-war crisis, symbolic of the
661 deepening rift between East and West. Secretary of State Marshall transmitted several strong American protests to the Soviet Union over its recent actions in Hungary. The notes encompassed the full scope of the country's serious internal crisis as they protested the Soviet "attempt to nullify the electoral mandate given by the Hungarian people," criticized the Red Army for arresting Kovács, expressed the U. S. Government's "feeling of concern", and finally requested a thorough Soviet-American investigation of the situation. Although there were no direct replies from the Hungarian Government, Lieutenant General V. P. Sviridov, Soviet chairman of the A.C.C. for Hungary, rejected the notes and categorically stated that the Smallholders Party, its leaders and party members admitted that the party had been involved in the conspiracy. "The conspiracy itself is being investigated by a People's Court provided for by the Hungarian Constitution."[24]

665 These internal purges were obviously intended to destroy the
661 ideologically balanced elements of post-war Hungarian politics. A ruthless liquidation of the Smallholders Party and its parliamentary majority contributed not only to a closer cooperation of the parties of the Left, but actually opened the way for a Communist-dominated bloc such as now rules Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria. While the discovery of a right wing plot was of decisive value to the Communist Party, the coalition government which has survived several previous crises was in effect permanently crippled by it, and the influence of the Smallholders was considerably reduced by forcing them from one capitulation to another.

Press and Propaganda

204 Closely following the pattern of internal political developments, the trend of Hungarian newspaper writing has shifted considerably in the past few months. Today the Communist and Social Democratic press dominates the scene, displacing both in volume and political intensity the more moderate type of journalism characteristic of the immediate post-liberation period. The full impact of the *putsch* is

24 Cf. John MacCormac, "Russia Rejects U. S. Hungary Note," *The New York Times*, Mar. 9, 1947. Although officially suppressed, the American note of protest gained wide publicity and circulation in Budapest. The American Government's information service distributed over 10,000 copies of the Hungarian translation of this note in an effort to influence future party strategies and to bolster up the morale of the Smallholders Party.

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most clearly shown in writings of the Social Democrats. Recent publications of this political group tend to be extremely pro-Soviet, continually stressing the close alliance between the Soviet Union and Hungary, and the friendly and cordial relations between the Communist and Social Democratic Parties.

The Social Democratic daily, *Világosság*, is a storehouse of interesting and pertinent political information. One of the most colorful members of the Party, Anna Kéthly, a respected and widely known old-line Socialist, serves both as editor of *Világosság* and as vice-president of the lower house of Parliament. Recent issues have given complete accounts of the joint sessions of Communists and Social Democrats under the auspices of the two Vice-Prime Ministers, Szakasits and Rákosi. The two parties have decided to sponsor a new *Cultural Society of Workers* dedicated "to the cultural and social promotion of the common objectives of Hungary's two Workers' Parties."[25] Cultural cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and Hungary is equally emphasized by *Világosság*. During the winter of 1946 a great deal of space was given to reviews describing guest performances of the Russian Military Theater of Kiev, which spent several weeks in Budapest. Friendliness toward the military and occupational policies of the great Eastern neighbor logically follows the stress on cultural cooperation. Soviet personalities are frequently discussed and party journalists do not fail to express their unbounded admiration. Marshal Vorosilov, until recently commander of Soviet occupational forces in Hungary, was hailed as "the country's most sincere friend who did everything in his power to insure the most lenient application of the armistice terms."[26] This orientation is supplemented by a determined anti-Western attitude in foreign political writings. Under the heading "Where are the workers' living conditions best?" *Világosság* states that according to the detailed surveys of American newspapers (?) the skilled industrial workers' living standards are better in the Soviet Union than in any other part of the world.[27] Sweden and the United States admittedly have very high living standards, but the economic performance of the U.S.S.R. and Sweden clearly illustrate what Communist and Social Democratic leadership can achieve in a modern society.

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25 Cf. *Világosság*, Budapest, Dec. 1, 1946, p. 1, and several subsequent issues, invariably devoting front page space to such attempts at inter-party cooperation.

26 Cf. *A Magyar Nemzet Naptára*, Budapest, 1947, pp. 43-44.

27 Cf. *Világosság*, Jan. 17, 1947, p. 3.

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204 665 The Communist newspapers[28] reflect similar thought patterns, more forcibly expressed and more generously documented. The single monthly periodical, *Társadalmi Szemle* (*Social Survey*), presents a violent version of party-line views and opinions under its bannerhead *The Scientific Periodical of the Hungarian Communist Party.* A recent article by its editor, Béla Fogarasi, serves as an appropriate illustration of the narrow mentality of Hungary's Communists. Commenting on Churchill's Fulton, Missouri, speech, the author states that "To prove that there is no democracy in Southeastern Europe, Churchill cites the inordinate growth of Communist parties. Danubian peoples, however, reason differently from Mr. Churchill. They are fully aware that *there can be no democracy without Communist parties,* . . . their self-confidence is also considerably increased by Marshal Stalin, who has frequently stated that they could freely rely on the sympathy and assistance of a real world power, the Soviet Union."[29]

204 In spite of recent revolutionary developments a few politically moderate periodicals seem to have survived. As the leftist bloc gains in strength and cohesion the number of these survivors will in all probability sharply decrease. Their present position is as precarious as the political destinies of the coalition government itself. Of these products of semi-liberal journalism *Magyar Nemzet* and *Haladás* are the most representative and reliable. *Magyar Nemzet* excells in its foreign news coverage and thus supplies valuable information on political developments in the rest of Danubian Europe. Its attitude toward the West is friendly, its opinions on international organization constructive.[30] 204 665 *Haladás* (*Progress*) is the weekly paper of a political non-entity, the Hungarian Radical Party, which nevertheless appears to camouflage a determined and intellectually effective group of professional people who have found a forceful and critical spokesman in the person of the

28 Best known among these are *Szabad Nép* (Free People) and *Szabadság* (Freedom), both of them daily papers, and *Szabad Föld* (Free Land), a weekly for "the Agricultural Class of Hungary."

29 Cf. Béla Fogarasi, "A dunai népek együttműködése (The Cooperation of Danubian Peoples)," *Társadalmi Szemle*, May, 1946, pp. 354 *et seq.*

204 665 648 30 In December, 1946 *Magyar Nemzet* reported in detail on two important conferences. One of these was the meeting of the Social Democratic Parties of Central Europe in Prague, with representatives of the Socialist Parties of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland, Bulgaria and Rumania. The strong Hungarian delegation was led by Anna Kéthly. The other meeting of international significance was the All-Slav Congress of Belgrade, held in order "to promote Slavic unity and brotherhood." According to this report, the Congress was primarily a meeting of the cultural representatives of the Slavic peoples and did not aim at the establishment of an all-Eastern European Slavic bloc. *Magyar Nemzet*, Dec. 8 and 9, 1946, p. 1.

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editor, Béla Zsolt. From all indications, Zsolt's articles carry a great deal of weight in influencing the public opinion of Budapest. The Smallholders' weekly publication, *Reggel*, manages to supply a detailed and interesting coverage of domestic developments, both economic and political. Such measures of internal reconstruction as the application of a nation-wide martial law and death penalties to black marketeers and smugglers are conscientiously discussed and appraised in *Reggel*.[31]

Few foreign language publications have penetrated the intellectual "iron curtain" around Hungary; Western political and literary materials cannot be disseminated. Soviet authorities officially protested in the fall of 1946 against the publication and distribution of the U. S. State Department Bulletin containing primarily official documents. The American Legation in Budapest, backed up by the State Department, has nevertheless continued to distribute the Bulletin on a mailing list basis. About 500 English language and 500 Hungarian copies are regularly sent to newspapers, and to a few carefully selected government officials.

Propaganda matters are handled by the Ministry of Public Information whose official objectives involve the "information and *influencing* of Hungarian public opinion." Democracy has to be accepted, states an official bulletin of Public Information, even by those who were misled by the destructive propaganda of the past few years and have thus far proved incapable of adapting themselves to Hungary's present-day democracy.[32] These broad and aggressive objectives were gradually implemented by such officials as the present Minister of Information, József Bognár, theoretically a Smallholder, in reality of the extreme Left. According to recent newspaper reports, his Ministry has organized hundreds of political and cultural indoctrination courses, given both in Budapest and in provincial communities under the personal supervision of Bognár. The courses deal with "timely political and social questions, including such problems as participation of the peasant class in a democracy and the successful methods of national planning."[33] Propaganda and press are closely interwoven in present

31 This drastic executive order was put into effect in December, 1946. Judges are in permanent sessions to deal with such cases without delay. In addition to Budapest tribunals, twenty-two provincial courts are handling "crimes" connected with black-market operations. Penalties range for a minimum of ten years' imprisonment to death sentences. Cf. *Reggel*, Dec. 2, 1946, p. 5.

32 Quoted in *Világ*, Nov. 23, 1946, p. 2.

33 Cf. *Magyar Nemzet*, Nov. 22, 1946, p. 3. The report indicates that there are over one hundred students in each course, the period of instruction covering about two weeks.

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with their own objectives, to set the stage for the tragedy of 000 the postwar years.

Certain it should have been that what had happened once could happen again. Even supposing that Stalin had reformed and become a true democrat, one should have arranged a safeguard or two against the possibility of a relapse. A quick glance at history should have been enough to remind one that Béla Kun had failed after 1918 because Western forces insured the maintenance of democratic institutions. And as a matter of fact Hungary was ruled from 1945 to 1947 by the Allied Control Commission, on which the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union were represented. Whether it was inevitable that the Western Powers would concede one position after the other cannot at present be determined. However, even after President Truman decided that Greece was not to be abandoned to the Russians, it was fashionable to believe that he had pledged the West to the support of "reaction." Not many critics stopped to think that the peoples affected were less interested at that time in "progress" or its opposite—there would be time to discuss such matters later on—than in the simple, stark fact that they were about to have the Russians at their throats.

Out of this somber complex of weakness and bad judgment 665 ● and gullible interpretation of Stalinism the Communist Party in Hungary emerged as a claimant for absolute power. It came forth almost precisely as it had come in 1919. There had been very few Communists in Hungary. But once again a group of Party agents who had lived in the Soviet capital during the war and had been thoroughly indoctrinated arrived by plane at Russian Army headquarters.* They proceeded to recruit

* The following Communists who had been active supporters of Béla Kun and had subsequently lived in Moscow returned during 1945 to resume their beneficent activities: Mátyás Rákosi, Kun's director of economic production, who was Chief of the Hungarian Section of the Moscow Commissariat for Foreign Affairs

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665 whomsoever they could. Violent anti-Semites and pro-Nazis, many with criminal records, were, as Hal Lehrman reported at the time, signed on the dotted line. Espionage and denunciation agencies were established. Nevertheless the anti-Communist population stood its ground well, though it was left unsteady by the sudden disappearance of the Regency, frightened by the brute impact of crimes against person and property by Russian soldiers, and cowed by shootings and arrests. It waited to see whether the Western Powers would give any indication that steps to protect Hungarian freedom would be taken.

648 175 Certainly the nation deserved a far better fate than would soon be meted out to it. To be sure, Admiral Horthy, who for years had waited like a cat for the mouse of opportunity to recovery Hungary's "lost territories," had welcomed the opportunity to do business with Hitler on this issue. Thereby he demonstrated anew the folly of Central European nationalism, which gobbled down small successes in the worst style of old-time autocratic dynastic imperialism, only to prepare itself for its own hour on the block. But on the other hand the Hungarian Prime Minister Count Teleki, alone among the European statesmen doomed to stand in Hitler's way, found the perfect symbol of opposition. He fought as long as he could against the alliance with Hitler and entry into the war. Then he took his life in protest. Cardinal Serédi,

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665 from 1940 to 1945; Zoltán Vas, Chairman of the Planning Bureau and one of Rákosi's most intimate associates, who served during the war as a colonel in the Red Army with responsibility for indoctrinating prisoners; Erno Gerö, Chairman of the People's Economic Council, who had gone to Moscow at the close of the Spanish Civil War; Karoly Kiss, Minister for External Affairs, captured by the Russians, who gave him further training in Party matters; Mihály Farkas, Minister for Defense, who had worked with the Communist underground in Czechoslovakia; and József Révai, Minister for Public Education, secretary to Kun in 1919, who had gone to Moscow prior to the outbreak of war between Stalin and Hitler.

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WARNING IN BUDAPEST

> In revolutionary tactics under a bourgeois régime, reform naturally becomes an instrument for disintegrating this régime, an instrument for strengthening revolution.
>
> Stalin, "Voprosy," 1945

BUDAPEST in the early summer of 1949 665
gave few signs of realizing that a new phase in the Hungarian revolution had begun. The man in the street would have heard nothing, of course, of the first Kremlin directives that to be a People's Democracy meant henceforth to be a proletarian dictatorship—if not immediately in the precise Soviet form, nevertheless with that as the goal. However, when Josef Revai, ideologue-in-chief of the Hungarian Workers' Party (Communist), made a programmatic speech in March to the Party leadership it clearly reflected the new Moscow line; and his ominous remarks were printed in one of the Party organs for anyone interested to read. There had been preliminary warnings also. As far back as the summer of 1948 the Deputy Prime Minister, Matyas Rakosi, had said that individual farming could not be tolerated in Hungary, and again, shortly before Revai went into explicit detail, Rakosi had spoken about the need for giving effect in Hungary to policies similar to those which his colleagues Dimitrov and Bierut already had announced in Bulgaria and Poland. Revai observed sharply that Rakosi's speech had not been "given the attention by Party leaders which it deserved." The general public might therefore have been excused for skipping over such unpleasant matters also. But the Revai talk should have been an alert to those outside the Party as well as to the faithful that the period of camouflage revolution was over.

From now on, Revai said in effect, the revolution would aim di-

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665 rectly and continuously towards establishing a Hungarian Communist dictatorship on the Soviet model. He admitted that contrary statements had often been made in the past. These had been merely useful tactical devices, however, to salve national pride and mollify moderate elements. He warned explicitly that he was not talking theory, "but about a really practical problem." The watchwords which he gave for the new offensive against surviving capitalism were "oppression and violence."

900 This sort of an offensive against the remnants of capitalism would mean more in practical terms in Budapest than in the other satellite capitals where similar warnings were being given. The everyday life of average people in Warsaw, Sofia or Bucharest, for example, would not be changed very drastically. In villages everywhere there would be resistance to Moscow's orders, and violence and perhaps starvation would follow. But in the three capitals mentioned the level of physical existence had already been reduced to about that in Russian provincial cities, and citizens who had not learnt to express their ideas about this or any other matter in language acceptable in a police state had already been put where their voices could not disturb the prevailing quiet. Changes could be only in degree, and a rather small one at that. In Prague the proletarianization process had been delayed, but was now under way with usual Czech thoroughness. In Budapest, however, the bourgeoisie had held on to their traditional easygoing manners under repeated blows and so far even found many of their accustomed surroundings and pursuits not unbearably altered. Among the Hungarian Communists themselves only the top leaders, Moscow's men of confidence, had understood how utterly the old life of the city was condemned to eventual destruction, as now disclosed by Revai, or how inevitably class warfare in the villages would ultimately utilize the full armory of terrible weapons that had converted the Russian peasantry into wage slaves of the state.

It was May, and all Budapest seemed to be enjoying the first really warm weather. Several of the graceful bridges across the river to Buda were still down, but the two or three in operation could accommodate the necessary tramcars by which all Budapest (outside the government) moves to work or pleasure. Gone were the

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661 These were the epithets that had been used against Kostov and Xoxe, and their use against a leading Hungarian Communist showed that Moscow's educational campaign was proceeding methodically among the faithful and not-quite-so-faithful in all the satellite states. Actually, the Rajk case was destined also to inaugurate a new phase in the Cominform's direct attack on Tito. It would provide evidence that he was not only a megalomaniac and heretic but that his heresy was simply a clever subterfuge behind which he was enabled to carry forward his traitorous work as an agent of the Western imperialists. But before we turn to this main theme let us learn a little more from Revai's speech about the policies that Moscow had decided to put into effect inside the individual states, in order to immunize local Communist Parties against any further spread of Titoism and strengthen the governments against new foreign risks. For it must have been realized that there was definitely a new risk in accusing Tito and the Western Powers of conspiring together to attack the Communist world, and in ordering the diplomatic and military measures which would naturally follow the making of such impudent charges.

665 Revai's first point was that a People's Democracy is "the dictatorship of the proletariat though not in the Soviet form," and his second was that the objective is to give it that form.[2] Coalitions of Communists with non-Communists are temporary tactical devices. Bourgeois parties are accepted in popular fronts merely in order to destroy them. Sometimes impulsive hotheads nearly spoil the game, as when the left-wing Socialists in Hungary after the war adopted the slogan "For a Red Budapest." The Communists had been more clever; they had avoided anything so frankly provocative, for their enemies outnumbered them and could still have saved themselves by taking resolute action. Thus Communists were careful not to mention, for instance, that the ultimate choice would be between any sort of private property and complete socialization, and they kept the public from worrying about such matters by talk about liqui-

[2] Revai's speech was delivered to leaders of the Hungarian Workers' Party (Communist) in March 1949 and published in the March-April issue of the Party magazine, *Tarsadalmi Szemle*. The text can be found in translation, with explanatory notes, in *Foreign Affairs*, New York, October 1949.

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dating the old feudal system by progressive means, something on which almost everyone was agreed.[8] 665

Once the Communist Party secures control, continued Revai, it cannot and does not share that control with any other party, class or group. He explicitly named the "working peasantry" among the outsiders. True, the Party platform states that "Today in Hungary the working class and its ally the working peasantry are in power." But the dictatorship of the proletariat, as defined by Lenin and Stalin, means that power "is undivided in the hands of the proletariat and that the working class does not share its power with other classes." (He passed over in silence the fact that Lenin and Stalin had defined it, when opportunism so dictated, as an alliance of the proletariat with the poor and middle peasantry.) And he added specifically: "Therefore it does not share its power with the peasantry." The Party platform dealt with these matters "only in a disguised form" because various basic questions, including "the Socialist development of agriculture, its collectivization," cannot always be talked about "by their real name." Similarly, though persons who call themselves Smallholders and Peasants are still in the government, this is only a convenient formality. "*In fact,* Comrades, it is the working class which is alone in power, *in fact*, it is our Party alone which runs the state machine." 665 565

The reason it is so absolutely necessary that the peasantry be excluded from power, Revai explained, is that "even its working part" is "halfheartedly for private property and halfheartedly for the coöperatives." It "vacillates," and must be led, educated and assisted. Obviously it would be foolish to let the very elements which

[8] This part of the speech must be read with particular chagrin by ex-Premier Ferenc Nagy, whose Smallholders Party won a decisive majority of votes in the Hungarian elections of November 4, 1945. In compliance with a prefection promise made under pressure of the Soviet Government and its troops of occupation, Nagy then formed a coalition government in which Communists as well as Socialists and National Peasant representatives were included. The Communists received, among other portfolios, that of the key Ministry of the Interior. The former American Minister to Hungary, H. F. Arthur Schoenfeld, has written (*Foreign Affairs*, New York, April 1948) that Nagy yielded on this point "only by peremptory Soviet orders." He might have done better to face a showdown then, for in May 1947 he was ousted by the Communists and their stool-pigeon deserters from the other parties, after a series of arrests of leading members of those parties. He decided not to return from a vacation in Switzerland to face arrest also.

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vacillate participate in the work of indoctrination: "that is why power cannot be divided with the peasantry."

Revai's conclusion is that "the power in possession of the working class must, in the interest of the shaping of Socialism, the oppressing of class enemies and the defense against imperialism be still much more decidedly and severely exercised than it has been up to now. 'Dictatorship' also means the exercising of force in oppressing enemies." [4] He said he recognized that force is not the only weapon. This, however, "does not mean at all that the functions of oppression and violence also appertaining to the dictatorship of the proletariat should be overlooked as secondary." The appropriate organs of the state should be unified and made ready for periods when "the chief function of the dictatorship of the proletariat will consist of using force against enemies from within and without."

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Our summary of all this can be brief. The Hungarian Communist Party relies on the Soviet Union for guidance and on the Soviet Army for support. It never coöperated with non-Communist progressive parties in good faith but only for tactical advantage. A People's Democracy is a dictatorship of the proletariat, and though not now in precisely the Soviet form it will steadily draw closer to it. A pressing task is collectivization of the land, by force if necessary. The peasants may coöperate with the workers, but the workers, represented solely by the Hungarian Workers' Party (Communist), will not share their leadership and power. Opponents will be liquidated by force.

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The intellectual climate having been prepared, the next step was to bring home to each member of the Hungarian Communist Party that he personally faced not a theory but "a really practical problem." This was achieved for the rank-and-file by ousting about 200,000 persons from membership and the privilege of belonging to the ruling minority. For Party leaders the lesson would be more terrifyingly "practical." It would take the form of a laboratory demonstration on the living body of one of their number. The choice fell on Laszlo Rajk.

[4] Earlier in the speech Revai had assured his hearers that they need have no fear that resort to force may provoke civil war. The power of the Soviet Union ensures against this; and in Hungary, specifically, the Soviet Army is "always here" to "support us."

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During the summer of 1949 the indictment was prepared in the necessary terms and various codefendants were selected for their ability to play supporting rôles in a well-rounded cast. By autumn the play was ready, and on September 11 a full outline of the plot and the names of the players were published in the Budapest newspapers.[1] Rajk had star billing, but some of the others were well-known too—Lieutenant-General Gyorgy Palffy, Chief-of-Staff of the Hungarian Army; Dr. Tibor Szonyi, head of Party enrollment and appointments; and Pal Jusztusz, member of the National Assembly and director of the Hungarian radio. To establish the link with Belgrade, Lazar Brankov was added. He was a former chargé d'affaires of the Jugoslav Legation who had renounced his post and stayed in Budapest at the time Tito was expelled from the Cominform, and he was now to have a chance to demonstrate his allegiance to his new masters by confessing publicly that he had betrayed them also. Several minor characters were brought in to play bit parts.

Were the story unfolded by these characters true it should encourage opponents of Communism no end, for if such trusted chiefs of an old and important Communist Party were free to practise every sort of perfidy their responsible colleagues could not be described except as naïve, careless and ignorant. There evidently was in addition a highly satisfactory degree of inefficiency and corruption in the counter-intelligence and among the spies whom the Hungarian Communist leaders employed to watch each other.

Thus the indictment asserts that Rajk, who helped bring the Communist régime to power in Hungary and from 1945 to 1948 controlled its chief organs of security, had become a police informer against his fellow Communists as early as 1931, and that he had continued as stool-pigeon and spy without interruption and without arousing suspicion for 18 years. It describes how he first became an agent of the Horthy police in return for being set at liberty after an arrest for distributing Communist leaflets; how he organized Communist groups of university students in order to denounce them; how he organized Communist strikes and denounced the participants; how he became a spy of the Horthy government in Czechoslovakia, and then enlisted in the Rakosi Battalion in the Spanish

[1] An English translation of the indictment of Rajk and his codefendants was published in the *New Times*, Moscow, September 14, 1949.

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Civil War in order to be able to start "undermining actions" among the other volunteers. When he was discovered (continues the indictment), he fled to France, was interned, and in certain specified camps met a number of "Jugoslav foreign intelligence agents," including Aleš Bebler, afterwards Jugoslav member of the U. N. Security Council, Karlo Mrazovich, afterwards Jugoslav Ambassador in Budapest, and other men who rose to top rank later on in Tito's Partisan army, besides many French, American and Gestapo agents. With these valuable new connections Rajk returned to Hungary to undertake espionage work on a larger scale. For appearance's sake he got himself arrested, but was let off lightly. If what was said about him were true he must have been in contact with more intelligence services than almost any other spy in Europe; yet he was so successful "in concealing his past," as the indictment puts it, that the Hungarian Communists received him back with innocent confidence, made him Secretary of the Party organization in Budapest, a member of the Politburo and a Member of Parliament. Then, still not recognizing him as a mortal enemy, they put him in charge of the Ministry of the Interior and the secret police. From that vantage point, and afterwards from the Foreign Office, he built up an espionage network throughout the government and recruited other conspirators to help execute his grand design. This was to assassinate his colleagues, seize power and sell out Hungary and Hungarian Communism to Marshal Tito and the American and other imperialists who were Tito's paymasters. His chief assistant was General Palffy, who was to see to the assassinations.

The substance of what might have been a common enough tale of the Communist underworld was thus spun into the scenario of a melodrama worthy of being played under the klieg lights and before the microphones of the Budapest People's Court, in the presence of 60 representatives of the world press. An inspired Soviet strategist saw that what had been planned as the sacrifice of a Communist official for the good of Party souls in heretical jeopardy could be lifted into the realm of international policy and perhaps made to bring Tito crashing down under the curses of his people. Convenient to this design, Rajk had been active before the war in Czechoslovakia, Spain and France, and later his high government

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posts had given him many opportunities to develop foreign contacts, secret and public. According to the Soviet story, Tito and his diplomats, knowing all that Rajk's own colleagues did not know about his past, entered into relations with him. They were able to do so without awakening Hungarian suspicions because, as the indictment put it, they "vilely exploited" the friendship felt by all Hungarians for the workers of Jugoslavia.

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So far the story would not have caused much of a sensation outside of Hungary. Another spy, another scapegoat, another execution. But the action was destined to occupy a larger stage. After the defeat of the Nazis in Jugoslavia, it seems, the American intelligence enlisted a large number of the former Gestapo agents remaining in the country, as well as Jugoslav "agents-provocateurs and Trotskyites." They worked so well together that in a short time "Tito's immediate entourage consisted mainly of these spies," who "systematically ousted from the government" the honest and loyal Partisans who had fought in the war. Tito, it seems, had secretly gone over to the Americans as early as 1944. At any rate, in December of that year the American intelligence was able to recruit a band of "Hungarian Trotskyite émigrés" in Switzerland, get them provided with false Jugoslav papers and send them in an American army plane to Belgrade. From there (after receiving further instructions from the Jugoslav secret police) they were landed by the same plane in Hungary, "in the rear of the Soviet Army." Safely at home, they destroyed their Jugoslav papers, infiltrated into government posts and set to work as spies for Jugoslavia and the United States. In the summer of 1945 Tito and his Western bosses were ready to move into higher echelons. They took on Rajk as their chief agent and also engaged the Chief-of-Staff of the Hungarian Army, General Palffy, described in the indictment as "a Fascist officer of Horthy's army . . . who posed as a Communist." Apparently the Hungarian Communists were as innocent as the Russian Bolsheviks in picking their worst enemies to head their army and run their secret police—Palffy was the equivalent of Marshal Tukhachevsky and Rajk of OGPU chief Yagoda. Palffy went to work to help Rajk get "former Trotskyites, provocateurs and spies" into high posts. Among them were

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not merely Jugoslavs, but agents of Great Britain, the United States and France.

Lazar Brankov, the former Jugoslav diplomat who had gone over to the Cominform camp and now found himself accused of being a "double agent"—and who knows if he was not?—confessed that in the autumn of 1947, that is, before the Cominform dispute reached an acute stage, the Jugoslav Government considered the situation in Hungary ripe enough for them to proceed to overthrow the régime. Tito at about this time visited Budapest and signed the Jugoslav-Hungarian treaty of friendship which received such universal praise throughout the Communist world. The treaty was only an excuse, however. Rajk wanted to prepare the way for his *putsch* by "systematically endeavoring artificially to create popularity for Tito and diminish the great prestige enjoyed by the Soviet Union." When Tito left for home, accompanied by Rankovich, the Jugoslav Minister of the Interior, Rajk went with them as far as the frontier. Brankov, who acted as interpreter on this trip, states that Rankovich used the occasion to tell Rajk the full scope of Tito's plan: "to bring the People's Democracies into Jugoslavia's orbit, with its center at Belgrade." The action in Hungary thus was to be only the first step. Tito's instructions for carrying it out were that Rajk should "orient" himself "on the nationalist, chauvinist elements in the Army, the police and the government service, and on the petty-bourgeois forces in the cities, and especially in the countryside."

However, in the spring of 1948 the Cominform decided to act strongly against Tito. As Rajk was a member of the Politburo he naturally heard that the Cominform was aware of Tito's "treachery" and, according to the indictment, told Tito what was happening. Exact dates are not mentioned, but it will be recalled that in August, following the break between Tito and the Cominform, Rajk was "demoted" from Minister of the Interior to Minister of Foreign Affairs. Was he in fact a "nationalist" in the sense that Gomulka and others objected to arbitrary Soviet action in the Cominform? If so, there may have been others in the Party hierarchy in sympathy with his views. That would explain his being retained in the government and even placed where he would have frequent oppor-

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000 tunity to consult with other satellite statesmen who might be sympathetic also.

621 Tito's expulsion from the Cominform made it necessary for the
●265 conspirators to recast their scheme of operations. Accordingly, the
648 story runs, Rankovich met Rajk secretly in southern Hungary in October 1948 and unfolded a "brilliant new plan" through which Tito expected that he could "gradually turn the Jugoslav people against the Soviet Union and bring them into the camp of the Western imperialists." In the first phase, Tito would not criticize the Soviet Union but would continue to profess friendship for it and for its leaders. After a time, however, he would begin emphasizing that it was the Soviet Union which made it impossible for Jugoslavia to carry out the Five Year Plan and other Socialist reforms. When Jugoslav living conditions failed to rise as they ought to do under Communist rule, "the friendship of our people will turn to hatred" (Rankovich's purported words). Then Tito could secure popular approval for deserting Russia and aligning himself with the West. To complete the program, Rajk would arrange frontier incidents in which Hungary would seem to be the aggressor, and General Palffy and other "army Fascists" would carry out the "physical annihilation" of Hungary's pro-Soviet leadership, including Rakosi, Farkas and Gerö. Just in time the whole plot was discovered, said the charge, and "in the middle of May the arrests of the conspirators began."

Everybody confessed to everything. The confessions had been secured in advance, before the indictment was prepared or the trial began. Each defendant—or rather non-defendant, for none made any defense—seemed intent only on gaining credit by not merely admitting his alleged crimes but by magnifying them. Some interesting new details came out in this way. Brankov, for example, said that the plot for the West to wrest control of the Balkans from the Soviets was initiated in 1943 when the Western Allies began helping Tito, and that the instigator was Winston Churchill, assisted by various British and Americans, including Brigadier Maclean, head of the British military mission to Partisan headquarters, Allen W. Dulles, a director of OSS activities in several European resistance movements, and practically all the American and British officers

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known to have worked with the Partisans during the war. These were supposed to have succeeded in bringing around three members of the Jugoslav Politburo—Rankovich, Kardelj and Djilas—to the idea that postwar Jugoslavia should be a bourgeois capitalist state and that it should head a Balkan federation of similar states. Even Tito himself was supposed to have finally accepted the program. Indeed, he never had wanted Communism sincerely. One indication of this was that for a long time he rejected Soviet help in liberating Jugoslavia, though in the end he had been forced to ask for it.[2] His pro-Communist pose had been necessitated by the fact that of course the Jugoslav people did sincerely favor Communism. So Brankov testified. Palffy's chief contribution, beyond confirming everything that Rajk and Brankov had confessed, was the information that the date for the *putsch* in Budapest had been set definitely for May or June 1949 (incidentally the period of my visit, which would explain why Rajk was so busy).

The tale is worked out in ingenious detail, and parts of it may even be true. Rajk was known and feared in Budapest as a stern operator against class enemies, and in his dealings with foreign diplomats he was habitually cold, disagreeable and forbidding. These characteristics would not have prevented him, however, from opposing Moscow's domineering ways or sympathizing to some degree with Tito's efforts to prevent Jugoslavia from being exploited for Russia's benefit. But no operator is clever enough to participate in plots in which the principals suddenly shift sides without laying himself open to later accusations that he had played some sort of double game. To collaborate with class enemies as a matter of expediency (as Revai found quite natural) must be harrowing enough; for what is expedient today, you must be fully aware, will not be so considered forever, and when it is no longer there may be excellent reasons of expediency for making you "the goat." But what must be truly excruciating is to find that the ally with whose secret agents you have been working—as Rajk would have worked with the agents of Nazi Germany when she was Russia's ally—suddenly turns into an enemy. Almost surely you will have left some sort of incriminating evidence

[2] *Cf.* Chapter III for Pijade's description of Tito's futile appeals to "Grandfather" for help.

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in the hands of your former colleagues. Worse, you know only too well that whether this is so or not those former colleagues of yours will in any case inform against you if this will ingratiate them with your master and persuade him to put them on his payroll and send you to the hangman. Rajk could not possibly have emerged from the morass of Nazi-Communist collaboration without leaving muddy footprints to the doors of a hundred suspicious characters and providing each of them with a motive to give evidence against him, equally damaging whether true or false.

The Jugoslavs reacted violently to the attack launched against them by the Cominform through Rajk. Their most telling argument was that the Hungarian Government was guilty of precisely the crimes which it attributed to Jugoslavia—pressure, threats, spying, border incidents—and that as it had no other means of defense it took the only possible course of accusing Jugoslavia first.

A series of government communiqués issued in Belgrade attempted to dispose of various questions of fact. For example, it was pointed out that the Jugoslav Communists whom Rajk had supposedly met in French concentration camps after the Spanish civil war were not in those camps; Bebler and Mrazovich, for example, had been seriously wounded, had been taken directly to Paris and transported from there to Jugoslavia. In reply to the charge that the Jugoslav Government plotted to overthrow the Hungarian Government, it was asked why in that case Jugoslavia had done so much to help Hungary consolidate her position economically and politically? Rakosi and the other Hungarian leaders had often come to Belgrade for help and advice, and they always had said publicly as well as privately how grateful they were for what they received. The Hungarian press had been lavish with expressions of gratitude to the Jugoslavs—that they had made such small demands on Hungary for reparations, that they had given Hungary credits without interest, that they had so loyally supported the Hungarian position at the Paris Peace Conference, oblivious of Hungary's many unjust acts toward Jugoslavia during the war. As to Rankovich's alleged meeting with Rajk in southern Hungary, it was stressed that the indictment "did not dare specify any exact date." Rankovich had been in

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were prepared for the trial. You saw that at the trial there was everything desired. How you achieve having people pile guilt on themselves, I do not know, but that some monstrous method does exist is certain.

An acquaintance of mine who reported the trial for the London *Times* said in one of his excellent long dispatches that Rajk agreed "almost blandly" to everything of which he was accused, that his tone throughout was quite impersonal and that he "spoke more as one relating a narrative than as a man confessing." The account reminds one of what observers wrote of the purge trials in Moscow in the thirties. A few months before the Rajk trial, Cardinal Mindszenty, pleading guilty to a long list of charges, many of them highly improbable, had made his answer to each in almost the identical phraseology in which the police had stated it first. Rajk did the same. The police accusations, he said, were all correct. He added that he had done everything of his own volition, that he was his own Mephistopheles. He asked to be hanged.

He received his request. He was hanged October 15. With him were hanged Dr. Tibor Szonyi and an assistant. After Palffy's case had been reviewed by a court-martial he was hanged too. The others got off with prison sentences.

Mosha Pijade wrote in the Belgrade *Borba*[8] that it was "unimportant and accidental" that Rajk and Palffy happened to be the accused, and hence unimportant and accidental that they happened to be hanged. What was important, he said, was that the trial provided proof that "Great Russian chauvinism does not hesitate to use any measures for its infiltration into the life of European nations and for advancing Great Russia as the world nation—the leader." He said: "It is the acme of malicious hypocrisy when someone in a desire to hide his own crime ascribes that crime to the very one the crime is directed against. Actually, that is the basic and characteristic line of the entire struggle which has been waged for such a long time against Socialist Jugoslavia by certain leaders of the Soviet Union, supported obediently by their aides in the other People's Democracies and in certain other Communist Parties." And he gave in a single sentence his estimate of the cause and effect of this action:

[8] September 22, 26 and 29, and October 5 and 6, 1949.

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sent by Horthy in 1944, which experience, however, did not save him in the end. The Soviets were willing to work with such a man as long as expediency demanded, but not permanently. Against these favorable facts from the Russian viewpoint was the fact that he had been Chief Inspector of the Gendarmerie in 1943. It may be noted that in prewar Hungary the gendarmerie and state police, which in peace time were under the Ministry of Interior, in war time were incorporated into the army directly under the Chief of Staff. Miklos had been first aide-de-camp to Horthy and was therefore, in the long run, not acceptable to the Communists. Vörös, who had been Chief of the General Staff in 1944, had in that capacity accompanied Horthy on a visit to Hitler. The services which these men performed for the Russians at the end of the war exempted them from immediate removal and in some cases, such as that of Miklos, from execution. But they did not, in the long run, exempt them from removal.

One reason why the officers who went over to the Russians at the end of the war were purged so quickly— more quickly than in Romania— is that they were of relatively upper class origins. One of the factors determining an officer's attitude toward the German occupation, Nazism, and the Szalasi Fascist movement was class origins. It is not accidental that those generals who in the great crisis remained loyal to the Regent and directly or indirectly took part in the frustrated armistice attempt were perhaps without exception members of Magyar gentry families. They included such generals as Lajos Veress, Bela Miklos, Istvan Naday, Gabor Faragho, Geza Lakatos, Szilard Bakay, and others. None of them came from the lower-middle classes. Descendants of the lower-middle classes were more inclined to follow a new star, such as that of the demagogue Szalasi and later the Communists, while the gentry in its nationalistic conservatism was opposed to parvenus such as Hitler or Szalasi. Because of their high status and conservatism the generals who rejected Nazism and stood close to Horthy, backing his attempt to end the war, were for the long haul quite unacceptable to the Russians, despite the fact that they had brought Hungary over to the Russian side. No ideological dogmatism prevented the Russians from using them when they needed them. But as men of unacceptable views and a strong independent social standing they did not fit the long-run requirements of the Stalinist system of organizing power, which is based on total control from the center and the elimination of autonomous elites.

B. The Period of Communist Infiltration

As in all the satellite countries, the period between 1945 and 1947 was one of uneasy coalition between the Communists and non-Communist parties. As in each of the satellite countries, the titular heads of the government were leaders of non-Communist parties who fought

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a rearguard action against both the Russian occupation authorities and the Communist party in order to save their country from total dictatorship. The Communists, however, were step-by-step building up bases of action, finding sources of support, and infiltrating key positions in the country.

In Hungary the major party was the Small Holders party. From November 1945, when the Miklos provisional government came to an end, to December 1948, when a clearly Communist government took over, there were a series of governments headed by members of the Small Holders party. The prime ministers were, in sequence, Zolt'an Tildy, Ferenc Nagy, and Lajos Dinnyés. At the same time there was a series of Ministers of National Defense, who were also until September 9, 1948, members of other parties than the Communist. Some of these were high-ranking generals, some were not. As our previous case studies reveal, the Minister of National Defense in the Communist satellite countries (and in those countries also before the Communists took over) was normally a general. There was not the sharp distinction between civil and military authority which is common in some Western countries. It is as unusual in East Europe for the Minister of National Defense not to be the top-ranking general as it is unusual here for him to be so.

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In Hungary, however, that was not the situation. Until September 1948 the Ministers of National Defense, though officers, were chosen in terms of civilian politics as much as for military considerations. The list of Ministers of Defense includes, in sequence: Janos Vörös, Jenö Tombor, Albert Bartha, Lajos Dinnyés, Peter Veres, Mihaly Farkas, and Istvan Bata. Until Veres they were all Small Holders party members. Veres was a member of the National Peasant party and a more pliable tool of the Communists. Farkas was a Communist leader and Bata a Soviet officer. Of these Ministers we have already met Colonel General Janos Vörös, one of the three leading officers in the Miklos group which went over to the Russians at the end of the war. Albert Bartha was also a leading officer who just before his appointment had been one of the three commissioners responsible for selecting officers for discharge as the Hungarian Army was cut to treaty size. On this commission he represented the non-Communist point of view but was consistently outvoted two-to-one in trying to retain career officers and keep out Communists. Bartha had been a Social Democrat in 1918 and rejoined them in 1945. Ferenc Nagy gives an interesting picture of the procedure by which Bartha was chosen Minister. He writes in his memoirs:

> "I still had to appoint a new man as Minister of Education and another in the place of Eugene Tombor, Minister of Defense, who had died . . . My nominee for the defense post was John Eröss, until now